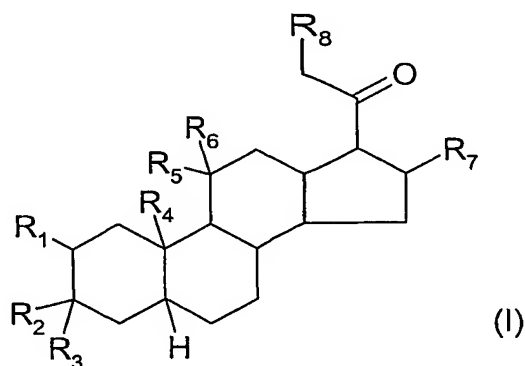


Claims:

1. A method for reducing opioid tolerance in a patient undergoing treatment with that opioid who has become tolerant thereto as a result of that treatment, comprising treating the patient with a neurosteroid of formula (I)



wherein R_1 is H or methyl; R_2 is OH and R_3 is H, or R_2 and R_3 taken together are O; R_4 is H or methyl; R_5 and R_6 are each H, or R_5 and R_6 taken together are O; R_7 is H or methyl; and R_8 is H, OH, $-OC(=O)CH_3$, SH, $-SC(=O)CH_3$, Cl, Br or F;

said neurosteroid being administered either (i) while the patient is also undergoing treatment with that opioid or (ii) after cessation of treatment with that opioid and prior to resumption of treatment with that opioid.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the neurosteroid is used in the form of a solvate, salt, prodrug or analgesically active metabolite thereof.

3. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein in the neurosteroid R_1 is H.

4. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein in the neurosteroid R_2 and R_4 are in the alpha conformation.

5. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3 wherein the neurosteroid is 21-acetoxy-3alpha-hydroxy-5alpha-pregnane-11,20-dione.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the 21-acetoxy-3alpha-hydroxy-5alpha-pregnane-11,20-dione is administered as its acetate or glucuronide.
7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the opioid is morphine.
8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the opioid is administered in an intragastric, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous, or transdermal pharmaceutical formulation.
9. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7 wherein the neurosteroid is administered in an orally administrable pharmaceutical formulation.
10. The use of a neurosteroid of formula (I) as defined in any of claims 1 to 6 in the manufacture of a medicament for reducing opioid tolerance in an opioid-tolerant patient.
11. The use as claimed in claim 10 for reducing morphine tolerance in an morphine-tolerant patient.